the German assertions, and say that a peace offer without terms was not genuine. In his opinion it would be better for France to take the lead in answering, and a conference to settle the reply would be unnecessary and inadvisable.

In view of what happened later, the attitude of Russia towards the German peace overtures has an interest of its own. The Russian answer *Reply of* was inspired by the Duma and not by the *Russian Duma Czar* alone. The Russian Duma decided in favour of making peace " only after victory." M. Pokrovsky, the Foreign Minister, pointed out that there was nothing in the German Note to suggest that the peace the Central Powers were prepared to make would be satisfactory.

cc What are the circumstances in which the German proposal was made ? The enemy armies have devastated and occupied Belgium, Serbia, and Montenegro, and a part of France, Russia and Roumania. The Austro-Germans have just pro-claimed the illusory independence of a part of Poland, and are by this means trying to lay hands on the entire Polish nation. Who then, with the exception of Germany, could derive any advantage under such conditions by the opening of peace negotiations ? . . . To attempt at the last moment to profit by their fleeting territorial conquests before their domestic weakness was revealed—that was the real meaning of the German proposal. In the event of failure they

will exploit at home the refusal of the Allies to accept peace in order to rehabilitate the tottering morale of their populations."

" Another motive," M. Pokrovsky continued, " might be a hope of exploiting elements of cowardice amongst the Allies. *But Russia would fight on for a*